

Abstract of the Disclosure

A method and apparatus is provided for automatically classifying a defect on the surface of a semiconductor wafer into one of a predetermined number of core classes using a core classifier employing boundary and topographical information. The defect is then further classified into a subclass of arbitrarily defined defects defined by the user with a specific adaptive classifier associated with the one core class and trained to classify defects only from a limited number of related core classes. Defects that cannot be classified by the core classifier or the specific adaptive classifiers are classified by a full classifier.

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